



COUNTY OF RAINS

BRENT D. HILLIARD
COUNTY JUDGE



EXTENDED ICE STORM EVENT PREPARATION ADVISORY

90+ Hour Event with Potential Multi-Day Power Outages

Rains County Judge's Office
Issued January 23, 2026 at 3:20pm

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED: PREPARE NOW

An extended icing event is forecast with potential power outages lasting multiple days. **Residents must begin preparation immediately.** This advisory provides essential information to protect your family, home, and property during this extended weather event.

CRITICAL TIMELINE

- **Before Storm:** Complete all charging and fuel preparations
- **During Storm:** Remain indoors, avoid travel, monitor emergency broadcasts
- **After Storm:** Assess damage, report hazards, follow road closure advisories

TEL: (903) 473-5000

FAX: (903) 473-4298

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BATTERY AND ELECTRONIC DEVICE CHARGING

Charge all devices **immediately** and maintain charging throughout the event:

Personal Electronics

- Cell phones and mobile devices (consider charging in vehicle)
- Tablets and laptop computers
- Portable power banks and battery packs
- Rechargeable flashlights and lanterns
- Hearing aids and medical alert devices
- CPAP machines and respiratory equipment (have backup power plan)

Home Preparation

- Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio (essential for storm updates and emergency alerts)
- Portable battery-powered or hand-crank radio for information reception
- Flashlights with fresh, extra batteries (multiple units recommended)
- LED lanterns with backup batteries
- Digital thermometers for food safety monitoring

Generator and Backup Power

- Fill generators with fuel **before the storm** (refueling after outage begins may be impossible)
- Store fuel cans safely and away from living spaces
- **CRITICAL SAFETY:** Never operate generators indoors, in garages, basements, or enclosed spaces—they produce deadly carbon monoxide. Generators must be outside, at least 20 feet from windows, doors, and vents
- Test generator operation before the storm

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- Ensure carbon monoxide detectors are functional and outside vents are clear of debris

FUEL REQUIREMENTS

Vehicle Gas Tanks

- Fill all vehicle fuel tanks to capacity **before the storm**
- Fuel stations may close due to power outages or be unreachable after the event
- Do NOT rely on finding fuel during or immediately after the event
- Consider extra fuel for generators (in approved containers)
- Keep fuel stored safely outside in clearly labeled containers

Heating Fuel

- Ensure adequate fuel for fireplaces, wood stoves, or kerosene heaters
- If using kerosene heaters: refuel **outside only**, maintain 3-foot clearance from flammable objects, ensure proper ventilation to prevent carbon monoxide accumulation
- **CRITICAL:** Never use charcoal grills, camp stoves, or oven burners for heating—they produce deadly carbon monoxide indoors
- Cut and stack firewood before the storm

FOOD AND WATER SUPPLIES

Drinking Water (Essential)

- **Minimum 1 gallon per person per day** for 4+ days (recommend 2 gallons per person)
- Include water for pets
- Stock bottled water and additional tap water containers

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- Fill bathtubs with water for non-potable uses (toilet flushing, cleaning)
- Freeze water containers to help preserve refrigerated food and provide extra drinking water as they melt

Food (No Cooking Required)

Stock non-perishable, ready-to-eat foods requiring no cooking or refrigeration:

Protein and Nuts:

- Peanut butter (shelf-stable)
- Nuts and seeds
- Canned or packaged tuna and chicken
- Beef jerky and meat snacks
- Protein bars and granola bars
- Canned beans and legumes

Fruits and Vegetables:

- Dried fruit (raisins, dried cranberries, dried apples)
- Canned fruits (apples, peaches, pears, pineapple)
- Canned vegetables (corn, green beans, carrots)
- Applesauce pouches

Grains and Carbohydrates:

- Granola and cereal (eaten dry or with shelf-stable milk)
- Crackers and whole grain bread
- Oatmeal and instant breakfast items
- Ready-to-eat meals and MREs (Meals Ready to Eat)

Beverages and Supplements:

- Instant coffee and hot chocolate (can be heated with proper ventilation)
- Herbal tea bags

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- Shelf-stable milk and non-dairy milk alternatives
- Electrolyte drink mixes or sports drinks

Baby and Pet Supplies:

- Extra infant formula (non-perishable)
- Extra diapers
- Pet food for entire outage period
- Pet water (minimum 1 gallon per pet for several days)

Important: Include a manual can opener and utensils for preparing canned foods.

REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER MANAGEMENT

Before the Storm

- Set refrigerator to 40°F or below
- Set freezer to 0°F or below
- Freeze water containers and ice (for cooling if power fails)
- Place penny on top of frozen cup in freezer—if penny is displaced after power outage, freezer contents warmed and thawed; discard uncertain items

During Power Outage

- **Keep refrigerator and freezer doors CLOSED** (critical for food safety)
- Unopened refrigerator maintains safe temperature for approximately 4 hours
- Full freezer maintains safe temperature for up to 48 hours
- Do NOT reopen doors to check contents

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After Power Restoration

- Discard perishable foods that reached 40°F or above for 4+ hours
- **When in doubt, throw it out** — appearance and smell are not reliable food safety indicators
- Follow FDA guidelines: if uncertain about temperature history, discard item

HEATING AND COLD-WEATHER PREPARATION

Alternative Heat Sources

- Fireplace with adequate wood supply or gas fireplace with fuel
- Wood-burning stove with fuel
- Propane or natural gas stove (with proper ventilation)
- Space heaters with automatic shutoff (ensure 3-foot clearance from flammable objects)

Heating Safety Requirements

- Never use charcoal grills, camp stoves, or ovens for heat
- Never run generators in enclosed spaces
- Ensure carbon monoxide detector is functional
- Check smoke alarms monthly; replace batteries if needed

Cold-Weather Gear and Comfort

- Winter coats, hats, scarves, insulated gloves, thermal socks, boots
- Multiple heavy blankets per family member
- Electric blankets (if backup power available—uses minimal power)
- Hand warmers and hot water bottles

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- Sleeping bags (for warmth huddle in one room with minimal heating)

Pipe Freeze Prevention

- Insulate and wrap exterior water pipes
- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses
- Allow water to trickle from faucets (especially interior sinks on exterior walls)
- Open cabinet doors under sinks to allow warm air circulation
- Seal any cracks around pipes entering the home

MEDICATIONS AND MEDICAL NEEDS

Essential Medication Supplies

- 7+ days of all prescription medications (not just 2-3 days)
- Over-the-counter medications: pain relievers, antihistamines, anti-diarrheal, antacid
- First-aid kit with bandages, antiseptic, pain relief, tweezers
- Thermometer (for fever monitoring)
- Medical alert identification (if applicable)

Medical Device Planning

- CPAP/BiPAP users: arrange backup battery power or alternative sleep arrangements
- Oxygen equipment: ensure backup supply and battery backup for compressors
- Diabetic supplies: store at proper temperature (insulin requires cool environment)
- Dialysis and other ongoing treatments: contact your provider NOW for backup plan

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- Mobility aids, walkers, canes: ensure accessible if power affects charging

PERSONAL HYGIENE AND SANITATION

Hygiene Supplies

- Dry shampoo (for hygiene without water)
- Water wipes and washcloths
- Hand sanitizer and antibacterial wipes
- Toilet paper, tissues, paper towels (ensure adequate supply)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Diapers and incontinence products
- Soap and other toiletries

Sanitation if Water Service Affected

- Fill bathtub with water for flushing toilets
- Provide bucket near toilet for water scooping
- Disinfectant wipes and cleaners
- Garbage bags for waste management
- Consider portable chemical toilet or camping toilet as backup

DOCUMENT AND FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

Important Documents and Information

- Keep in waterproof/fireproof document bag or container:
 - Birth certificates and Social Security cards

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- Insurance policies (homeowners, auto, health, life)
- Property deeds and mortgage documents
- Bank account information and passwords (written securely)
- Medical records and medication lists
- Identification documents
- Utility account numbers
- Property photos for insurance claims

Financial Considerations

- Withdraw cash **before the storm** (ATMs and card readers may not function during outages)
- Store cash in secure location
- Have small bills for transactions (stores may lack change-making capability)
- Note utility company emergency numbers

PET AND LIVESTOCK PREPARATION

Pet Emergency Supplies

- Extra pet food for entire outage period (minimum 7 days)
- Extra pet water (minimum 1 gallon per pet for several days)
- Pet medications and first-aid supplies
- Leashes, carriers, and ID tags
- Litter and litter box (for indoor cats)
- Warm bedding and shelter
- Waste bags and disposal supplies

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Livestock Considerations

- Ensure adequate feed and hay supply stored and protected
- Have water supply plan (heated water stations, de-icer)
- Shelter from ice and wind (clean, dry areas with windbreak)
- Accessible veterinary emergency contacts
- Current photos and identification for livestock (in case displaced)

VEHICLE EMERGENCY KIT

Keep in each vehicle:

- Mobile phone charger (car charger)
- Blankets and emergency blankets
- Winter clothing (extra coat, gloves, hat)
- Hand warmers
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Non-perishable food and bottled water
- Windshield de-icer and ice scraper
- Sand, salt, or cat litter (for traction if stuck)
- Jumper cables and battery booster pack
- Tire chains (if applicable to your area)
- Shovel
- Tool kit
- Tow rope
- Jack and spare tire (ensure tire has air)
- Tire inflator

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Critical: Do NOT travel during ice storm unless absolutely necessary.
Emergency vehicles may be unable to respond to accidents.

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Special Considerations

- Elderly and disabled individuals: ensure medications, medical equipment, mobility aids are prepared
- Pregnant women: contact provider for extended outage planning
- Infants: extra formula, diapers, wipes, medications (if applicable)
- Children: comfort items (books, games, activities for extended indoors confinement)
- People with mental health conditions: extra medication supply and coping strategies
- Homeless individuals: identify warming centers and emergency shelter locations

EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Stay Informed

- Monitor NOAA Weather Radio for emergency alerts and updates
- Listen to local emergency management updates
- Follow official county social media for information
- Keep phone charged (use car charging if necessary)
- Register with county emergency alert system (if available)

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Emergency Contacts

- **Rains County Emergency Services:** 911 for immediate emergencies
- **Rains County Non-Emergency Line:** (903) 473-3181
- **Road Closures/Travel Information:** DriveTexas.org
- **Utility Company (Farmers Electric, Oncor, Texas New Mexico):** (903) 455-1715, (888) 313-4747, (888)866-7456
- **American Red Cross Hotline:** 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)
- **FEMA Disaster Assistance:** 1-800-621-3362
- **Warming Centers:** The following warming shelters will be available for use during this weather event. If you need access to one of these shelters, please call the Sheriff's office Non-emergency line at (903)473-3181 (BEFORE YOU TRAVEL TO ONE OF THESE SHELTERS) in order to find out which shelter has availability.

Emory City Center
735 N. Texas Street
Emory, TX

Point Storm Shelter
273 N. 1st Street
Point, TX

Emory Baptist Church
260 Planters Street
Emory, TX

Believers Baptist Church
1133 N Texas Street
Point, TX

Bright Star Baptist Church
4537 FM 2795
Alba, TX

Miracle Faith Baptist Church
820 TX-276
Emory, TX

Point Church of Christ
150 N 1st Street
Point, TX

Lake Fork Baptist Church
9483 FM 515
Alba, TX

WHAT NOT TO DO

NEVER:

- Run generators inside homes, garages, basements, or enclosed spaces

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- Use charcoal grills, camp stoves, or ovens for heating
- Leave candles unattended or use as primary lighting
- Travel during the ice storm unless life-threatening emergency
- Ignore evacuation orders
- Reopen refrigerator/freezer during outage to check contents
- Use alternative heat sources without proper ventilation
- Assume stores will be open or accessible after the storm

RECOVERY AFTER THE STORM

Immediate Aftermath

- Check on neighbors, especially elderly and vulnerable persons
- Report downed power lines to utility company (do NOT touch)
- Document property damage with photos for insurance
- Check food safety (discard items at unsafe temperatures)
- Use generator safely for at least one more day (assume power still unstable)
- Avoid using roads until cleared (debris, hazards, downed lines)

Cleanup and Restoration

- Remove fallen branches safely (keep distance from power lines)
- Restore heat and utilities gradually
- Monitor for water damage and mold
- Take photos for insurance claims
- Contact insurance company for large losses
- Report utility problems via company website or phone

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SUMMARY: PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Complete Before Storm:

- [] Charge all phones, tablets, power banks, flashlights, lanterns
- [] Fill all vehicle fuel tanks
- [] Fill generator fuel containers (store safely)
- [] Stock 1+ gallon drinking water per person per day (4+ days)
- [] Stock 7+ days non-perishable food
- [] Stock 7+ days pet food and water
- [] Gather heating fuel or ensure fireplace/heater has fuel
- [] Collect and test flashlights, batteries, radio
- [] Freeze water containers (for cooling, drinking water)
- [] Ensure adequate blankets, winter clothing, hand warmers
- [] Fill bathtub with water (for flushing toilets)
- [] Stock personal hygiene supplies and toilet paper
- [] Fill prescriptions (7+ days supply)
- [] Gather first-aid kit, medications, medical supplies
- [] Ensure generators outside location is clear
- [] Test carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
- [] Disconnect outdoor hoses, wrap water spigots
- [] Stock pet items (food, water, shelter, medication)
- [] Prepare vehicle emergency kit
- [] Withdraw cash
- [] Gather important documents
- [] Prepare car with chains (if applicable)

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FINAL REMINDER

This is not about panic—this is about preparedness. Extended ice storms with prolonged power outages are serious events requiring planning and supplies.

Taking action **now**—before the storm arrives—ensures your family is safe, comfortable, and prepared for potential multi-day power outages.

If you have questions or need assistance with preparation, contact your local emergency management office or call the Rains County Judge's Office.

Prepare today. Stay safe.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brent D. Hilliard".

Brent D. Hilliard, County Judge

This advisory is issued by the Rains County Judge's Office based on current National Weather Service forecasts and federal emergency management guidance. Information is subject to change as weather conditions develop. Monitor official updates throughout the event.

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